LAST WORD

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Bridging the Chasm

Those who study advances in health care and other fields find a "generation" lag of about 20 years before discoveries are adopted haphazardly into standard practice. And three or four generations before an innovation, be it technical or intellectual, becomes so common that we no longer think of it as an innovation at all. Thus it is said that "science proceeds by the death of scientists."

Management is no different, so it's not surprising that despite many strategic transformations via IT by the mid 1970s, most officers and directors were oblivious or indifferent to IT in 1990. Yet by the turn of the century almost all were aware of IT's promise and peril. But awareness is not mastery, or even competence.

EA represents a new way of thinking about the enterprise, and a new way of managing the enterprise, and its IT. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke calls it "intangible capital." In his June 2006 MIT commencement speech, he said: "Important investments in intangible capital remain to be made, as much still remains to be learned about how to harness these technologies."

Enormous productivity gains occurred in the Industrial Age thanks to the intellectual or intangible capital of "scientific management" as described by Frederick Taylor. EA has the potential to contribute similarly to the Information Age.

Managing for productivity and quality is central to management practice today. But when we say "efficiency" or "productivity" most don't think of Taylor, his 1881 paper, 1911 book, or the words "scientific management" any more than we think of Joseph Juran, his 1928 pamphlet, 1951 *Quality Control Handbook,* or the words "statistical quality control" when we say "quality" or "effectiveness."

I don't know what the "EA" of today will be called in a few generations. I do know we will achieve the EA vision of bridging the chasm between strategy and implementation, of capturing all the knowledge about the enterprise and making it available in real time for every imaginable management need, and of having a shared "language" of words, graphics, and other depictions to discuss, document, and manage every important aspect of the enterprise. I know this because the enterprises that survive those next few generations will be agile, adaptable, interoperable, integrated, lean, secure, responsive, efficient, effective, and thereby more able to succeed in a world that demands we do more with less, faster, while traditional boundaries blur, and the rules of engagement change.

Succeeding in such a world requires that the enterprise masters the management of all the knowledge about itself. We are in the early stages of developing such skills. EA is the name of this emerging discipline.

EA isn't the organization any more than a map is the highway, blueprints the building or the idea the invention. But maps, blueprints, ideas, and EA are tools to help us efficiently and effectively get where we want to go. Without them, we're lost. **A&G**